

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
April 7, 2013
Second Sunday of Easter

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Responsive Call to Worship (Psalm 133-135 selected verses)

Leader: How wonderful, how beautiful,
when brothers and sisters get along!
It is like refreshing rain falling on dry soil and giving new life.

People: Come! Bless God, all you people of God!
Having kept watch in the dark of night,
Lift your praising hands to the Holy Place.

Leader: Our God commands a blessing in the character of our days,
And ordains eternal life.

All: We praise the name of God's beloved, and the works of God,
Shout for joy and sing the Holy names of the One
who embraces all creation with blessings of compassion. Amen.

Invocation: Come Holy Spirit probe the center of our conversation. Help us to greet you as we celebrate our fellowship and share visions of our hopes for our church. Our hearts come filled with concern for our family members and friends, and for everyone who needs your intervention of mercy and who seeks your guidance. Whisper your compassionate truth to touch our hearts with reconciliation in this hour of worship. Show us your ways, guide our discernment and teach us to love. Come now and meet us here with the power of your grace and a vision of peace. Radiate mercy from within us, as we reach out to you and worship you in Jesus' name. Amen

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Gospel Lesson: John 20:19-31

“Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but fearful of the officials, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, “Peace to you.” Then he showed them his hands and side.

The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were exuberant. Jesus repeated his greeting, "Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me. I send you."

Then he took a deep breath and breathed into them. "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive someone's sins, the sins are gone for good. If you don't forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?"

But Thomas, sometimes called the twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We saw the Master!"

But Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail holes in his hands, put my finger in the nail holes, and stick my hand in his side, I won't believe it."

Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the locked doors, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you."

Then he focused his attention on Thomas, "Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don't be unbelieving. Believe!"

Thomas said, "My Master and my God!"

Jesus said, "So you believe because you have seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing."

Jesus provided far more God-revealing signs than are written down in this book. These are written down so you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and in your act of believing, have real and eternal life in the way Jesus personally revealed it."

Sermon *"The Easter Beatitude"*

Pastor John Indermark

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: There cannot be a speck of greed, hatred, immorality, or any kind of impurity, because these are improper for God's Holy people- ...Rather let mercy and forgiveness be at the center of our character (Ephesians 5:8)

Confession: (in unison) O God, what have we forgotten to consider and do that would create the hope of reconciliation grace in our lives. Don't let us be overpowered by a sense of doubt or uncertainty. Show us how to reach out with forgiveness and heal wounds of isolation and separation. Help us to see beyond any single moment or event. Guide us to explore your vision of compassion. Grant us insight into any consequences resulting from our actions. Fill us with your mercy. Turn our hearts toward humble ministry so we can serve with love, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Jesus said, "If you live by my example, living as I tell you, you are my disciples. Then you will experience for yourselves the joy of truthfulness, and the truth will set you free." Amen.

Invitation to the Offering: If God gave many people the same gift he gave us when we believe in Jesus Christ, who are we that we should hinder God by not sharing in blessing others in Jesus' name.

Prayer of Dedication: God, we open ourselves in the Spirit of Your holy and sacred partnership. As you have blessed us, so we would become your blessing to each person gathered here. We would be instruments of peace for all whom we would reach out to in care and service. We ask you to work through these gifts of sharing to minister beyond what we now know. Let Christ's presence touch the lives of any who are in need. We place the gifts of our lives before You. Receive us and all that is within us unto Yourself, by the creative grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen